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# Record

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## New Central Hills facilities dedicated

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

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MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS



Mississippi Baptists celebrated more than \$1.1 million in improvements to Central Hills Retreat when they gathered April 16 in the newly-opened expansion of the dining hall to honor the volunteers who worked for several years to make the improvements a reality.

"For its thirty years of existence, Central Hills Retreat has been blessed with dedicated volunteers," said Barri A. Shirley, associate executive director for business services at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), which owns and manages the encampment through the MBCB Men's Ministry Department.

"Two words best describe these Baptist volunteers: stewardship and craftsmanship," Shirley said. "They understand that substantial savings are realized by the camp from their donated labor, thus more dollars are available to share the Gospel of Christ. They are also highly skilled individuals, true craftsmen and craftswomen. The quality of their work is beyond compare, and the significance of their input and involvement simply cannot be overstated."

The dedication ceremonies also featured a keynote address by Don Gann, longtime Mississippi pastor and currently a consultant in the MBCB Men's Ministry Department. Gann served for several years on the Central Hills staff, including the encampment's opening season in 1979.

**READY TO USE** — Participants in the dedication of the new facilities at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko pause during dedication ceremonies on April 16 to recognize the volunteers who made it possible. The dining hall expansion, where the dedication ceremonies took place, is the culmination of more than \$1.1 million in improvements over the past two years at the Mississippi Baptist encampment. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Dan West, Central Hills' former camp manager for 21 years, closed the ceremonies with a dedication prayer.

The \$991,000 dining hall expansion, which included equipment and grounds costs, is the capstone of an improvement program at the facility that totaled more than \$1.1 million over a two-year period and doubled the dining area available for use. Other construction and renovation projects that were part of the program include:

— renovation and furnishings for the Infirmary and Concession Building, which was done with 95% volunteer labor.

— renovation and furnishings for a new business office, which was also done with volunteer labor.

— extensive decking in several locations, also provided by volunteer labor.

— new furnishings for both wings of the dining hall.

Other Central Hills improvement projects completed in recent years include a miniature golf course, upgraded housing, and freshly-paved roadways.

"We are excited about the improvements at Central Hills,

including the completion and dedication of the new cafeteria. This will expand our ability to serve the churches of our state," said Jim Didlake, MBCB Men's Ministry director. "With a doubling of our feeding capacity, we will be able to expand our programs for children and youth to help meet the needs that exist today."

"I believe that God will continue to do great things through our efforts to minister at Central Hills."

Retreat Manager Jim Ray agreed. "I want to thank Mississippi Baptists for their continued faithfulness to the Great Commission through Central Hills Retreat.

"This isn't about some extra square footage at meal time; this is about allowing larger numbers of young people to attend our summer camps each week, and that equates to even more people experiencing salvation and growing in Christ."

"This is about increasing our capacity for retreats and conferences. This is about doing even more for the Kingdom."

Central Hills Retreat is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

For more information on the programs and events offered at Central Hills Retreat, visit [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org), and click on "Encampments" in the listings on the left side of the web page.

Ray can be contacted at [jray@mbc.org](mailto:jray@mbc.org).

## Cuba thwarts religious liberty visit

WASHINGTON (BP) — A scheduled visit to Cuba during which a U.S. panel planned to discuss religious freedom with faith communities and government officials was canceled when the delegation's visas were withheld by the Cuban government.

Commissioners and staff of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) were planning to visit the communist country April 14-16. The Cuban government provided no explanation for its refusal to issue visas April 13 and offered no other dates for a possible visit, according to USCIRF.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, was one of the commissioners scheduled to go on the trip.

Since 2004, USCIRF has listed Cuba as one of the countries on its "watch list," which consists of countries with limited religious liberties that are capable of deteriorating into extreme conditions. Countries on the watch

list, USCIRF says, require close monitoring for violations of religious freedom.

"The commission has received reports that there are improvements in some sectors in Cuba. As with other countries, we seek to ascertain how much and where. If everything is so normal in Cuba, then the Cuban government should welcome a USCIRF visit. Not allowing USCIRF's bipartisan delegation to visit is a very disturbing sign," USCIRF chair Felice Gaer said in a written statement.

Cuba's government strictly controls religious practice on the Caribbean island, according to the commission. The regime interferes with both registered and unregistered religious bodies, USCIRF has reported. Cuba would not have been the first country with a poor religious liberty record to be the destination of a USCIRF fact-gathering trip. Similar trips have been made by commission representatives to such countries as China, Saudi Arabia, and Vietnam, Gaer said.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.  
Perkins Jr.**  
Editor

EDITOR  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Tony Martin  
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN  
Benjamin Ivey  
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING  
Dana Richardson  
drichardson@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
Brenda Quattlebaum  
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

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Baptist Record Advisory Committee:  
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Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800  
Fax: (601) 292-3330  
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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# The true beauty of Carrie Prejean

Those of us of a certain, *ahem*, age recall beauty pageants of the past as rather sedate annual events during which we rooted for the comely contestant from our state. Aside from a few bathing suits that would be considered very modest by today's standards, there wasn't a lot of controversy swirling around the festivities or the outcome of pageants.

No longer. It seems every beauty pageant today — and the number has grown exponentially in recent decades — culminates in some kind of scandal. From nude photos to drug use to wild partying, beauty pageants have followed most of the rest of our culture into the gutter. To recall beauty pageants as sober displays of integrity and talent (not to mention beauty) is to truly date oneself.

The just-completed Miss USA 2009 beauty pageant created its own uproar, but in a much different way. Openly homosexual pageant judge Perez Hilton, a D-list celebrity gossip blogger who fancies himself as provocative, asked Miss California contestant Carrie Prejean if she favored the legalization of same-sex marriage.

"We live in a land where you can choose same-sex marriage or opposite and you know what, I think in my country, in my family, I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody out there, but that's how I was raised," said Prejean, a student at San Diego Christian College in San Diego, Ca.

The beauty queen had grabbed the third rail of American politics and cul-

"SIR, COULD YOU TELL ME WHICH RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION YOU ARE -- UH - AGAINST?"



ture. No one — absolutely no one — is allowed to question the validity of same sex marriage in this country today. As if to make that point, after the pageant Hilton condemned Prejean's answer in the strongest terms, referring to her in language so foul that it cannot be reprinted here.

The head of the Miss California pageant, Keith Lewis, told FOXNews.com that Prejean's outrageous statement saddened him. "As co-director of the Miss California USA, I am person-

ally saddened and hurt that Miss California believes marriage rights belong only to a man and a woman. I believe all religions should be able to ordain what unions they see fit. I do not believe our government should be able to discriminate against anyone and religious beliefs have no politics in the Miss California family," Lewis said.

Sorry, Mr. Lewis. The politics of same-sex marriage is everywhere today, from the White House in Washington, D.C., to City Hall in San Francisco — and nowhere in Prejean's pageant answer does she address her religious beliefs. Believe it or not, it's possible to have an opinion on same-sex marriage that doesn't have anything to do with one's religious beliefs.

When it's wrong, it's just wrong.

For her part, Prejean has stood by her answer even though it likely cost her the Miss USA crown along with the fame and fortune the title brings. She was chosen as the first runner-up.

Just to rub in the loss, Hilton told ABC News.com, "She lost it because of that question. She was definitely the front-runner before that."

"It did cost me my crown," Prejean told reporters. "I wouldn't have had it any other way. I said what I feel. I stated an opinion that was true to myself and that's all I can do."

Prejean gets it. It is important to be true to oneself, regardless of the consequences. She's paying a heavy price for her honesty, and even though she is perfectly willing to do so, the whole incident is a sad, sad snapshot of the direction our country is going.

May we not be counted as part of that tragic slide into perversity and, eventually, oblivion.

In essence, these churches are doing what Southern Baptists have typically called Discipleship Training during the Sunday School occasion.

There's nothing wrong with having a strategy to mature believers and equip them for ministry. My point is simply that churches need to understand the difference between when and what, when planning their disciple-making strategy and their Sunday School time.

\* Are small groups functionally equivalent to Sunday School or Discipleship Training? Churches that operate small groups often ask this question; well, at least once a year when they prepare to submit the ACP. In fact, many don't report small group participation at all, simply because they don't use the traditional labels, Sunday School and Discipleship Training.

However, most small groups are functionally equivalent to one or the other. If the groups are closed and primarily for believers, participation can be reported as Discipleship Training. If the groups are ongoing foundational Bible studies open to believers and nonbelievers, they are functionally equivalent to Sunday School and can be reported as such.

## GUEST OPINION: *What's in a name?*

By David Francis, director  
Sunday School  
LifeWay Christian Resources

teaching of God's Word is the foundation of Sunday School, but the weekly group meeting is the occasion for witnessing the fruit of the previous week's work and launching the work for the following week. So, if you have a better name that captures that dynamic, go for it.

\* Sunday School enjoys huge brand positioning. The above notwithstanding, the term, Sunday School, enjoys tremendous brand recognition and brand loyalty. The weekend Bible study ministry in my church has not officially been called Sunday School for more than a decade, but what do people call their small group leaders? Sunday School teachers.

Here's a test: Do you often use the term Sunday School to explain whatever it is you call your Bible study ministry? I

tried for more than 13 years to change the name of the sanctuary to "worship center" in a church where I served. I changed the signs, labeled locations "WC" in the bulletin, etc.

Want to guess what people call it today? That's right: the sanctuary.

\* Sunday morning does not make it Sunday School. The reverse is true, as well. A weeknight small group can be functionally equivalent to Sunday School.

These are curious days in church practice. Some churches are confusing the occasion of Sunday School, typically right before or right after the primary weekend worship service, with the ministry of Sunday School. They use that time predominantly for closed groups that are primarily for believers.

Clinton

WASHINGTON local reports — U.S. Hillary Clinton edged at a congressional hearing on abortion rights. Obama regards abortion as a "pro-life" cause that women throughout the country have a right to choose.

Clinton also expressed admiration for eugenicist Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood.

Appearing before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., happened to think that planning is an essential part of women's health care. "Abortion should be safe, [and] we are now an ally that will protect women, including those to reproductive rights."

The Secret Service responded to a question from Smith, leading pro-life Congress:

\* Is the administration's policy in Africa and America directed toward multinational organizations such as the United Nations by supporting Planned Parenthood?

\* Does the

define "reproductive rights" to include abortion?

Another

Republican

Fortenberry of

Homosexual

WASHINGTON voted Thursday to ban the step of what the gay rights House of Representatives full chamber orientation protected from national origin. Prevention chance of crime turned back cases, up to passed similar from President Clinton the community Convention Judiciary Committee. Fourteenth amending special sexual orientation making every president of his April 2009 Rights Campaign activist organization 10 years, a legislation

# Clinton: abortion is 'reproductive health'

WASHINGTON (BP) — U.S. Secretary of Hillary Clinton acknowledged at a congressional hearing that the Obama administration views abortion as "reproductive health" care and believes throughout the world that it is right to the procedure.

Clinton also defended her position for the late Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood.

Speaking before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Clinton told Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), "We have to think that family planning is an important part of women's health and reproductive health includes access to safe, legal and rare procedures now an administration will protect the rights of women, including their reproductive health care."

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton responded to two questions from Smith, probably the most pro-life advocate in Congress:

"the administration tries to undermine pro-life values in Africa and Latin America directly through international organizations, the United Nations, or supporting non-governmental organizations, such as Planned Parenthood? Does the administration believe in 'reproductive health' include abortion?"

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska, also



Clinton

questioned Clinton about the administration's funding of abortion. Fortenberry told her he has five daughters, adding, "[P]art of trying to raise them well and empower them to be successful, I believe, is enculturing them with the noble ideal that all persons have inherent dignity and, therefore, rights."

In her response, Clinton advocated for the ability of women overseas to choose abortion. "I admire you for raising five strong daughters who will be able to make their own choice and, most likely, given your guidance, will be very staunchly pro-life," she

told Fortenberry, "but that is a choice that they will be able to exercise as free, independent, American women. That's what I want for all women."

After the April 22 hearing, Smith said, "It is evident that Mrs. Clinton and President Obama want to force the tragedy of abortion upon women around the world, especially and including in countries where democratically elected leaders want to continue to protect their unborn children."

"There are other ways in which both mother and baby are protected, cared for and helped — with food, nutrition, clean water and life-affirming healthcare," Smith said in a written statement. "Secretary Clinton's inability to see this will mean more babies will die and more women will suffer the consequence of abortion as a result of U.S. foreign policy overseas."

Fortenberry told Clinton he did not "believe we should use American foreign policy to export abortion. This will undermine, in my view, our foreign relations in many areas throughout the world, including Latin America and Africa and among Muslim peoples."

"Promoting the international abortion industry is an imposition of our own woundedness upon others," Fortenberry added. "Abortion has caused tremendous grief in this society, and its export, I believe, will be seen as a form of neocolonialism that is paternalistic and elitist and an insult on the dignity of especially the poor and vulnerable. I believe women deserve better, women throughout the world deserve better."

During his first 100 days, Obama has initiated the repeal of some of the pro-life policies in effect during the Bush administration. Among these was his reversal of the Mexico

City Policy, which barred federal funds from organizations that promote or perform abortions overseas. He also has restored money through the State Department to the United Nations Population Fund, which had its congressional funding withdrawn by the Bush administration for seven years over its support of China's coercive population control program.

Smith and Fortenberry also questioned how Clinton could express admiration for eugenics promoter Sanger March 27 when the Planned Parenthood Federation of America gave Clinton an award named after a leader in the eugenics movement of the early 20th century.

Eugenics is the belief the human race can be improved by discouraging or coercively preventing the reproduction of people regarded as "unfit," — normally the disabled and poor — or promoting the reproduction of the "fit," those with genetic characteristics considered desirable.

Sanger was also a racist who proposed eliminating African Americans through the Planned Parenthood program due to what she believed to be their inferior nature.

During the Planned Parenthood's awards dinner, Clinton described receiving the Margaret Sanger Award as a "great privilege." Clinton said: "I admire Margaret Sanger enormously, her courage, her tenacity, her vision... I am really in awe of her."

Clinton also said the "20th-century reproductive rights movement, really embodied in the life and leadership of Margaret Sanger, was one of the most transformational in the entire history of the human race."

Smith told Clinton at the hearing, "With all due respect, Madam Secretary, Sanger's legacy was indeed transformational, but not for the better if one happens to be poor, disenfranchised, weak, disabled, a person of color, an unborn child, or among the many so-called 'undesirables' Sanger would exclude and exterminate from the human race."

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

### THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Looking back

10 years ago

A contemporary Christian concert and Sunday morning worship — both in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park — are being organized by the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists in connection with the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta.

20 years ago

Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering top one billion dollars during the 100-year anniversary of the offering. The first goal in 1888 was \$2,000 to send two missionaries to China, which was surpassed by giving \$3,115.26. It was enough to send three missionaries.

30 years ago

The Ras Beirut Baptist Church, the second Baptist church in the city of Beirut, Lebanon, is organized March 22 with 23 charter members and several persons awaiting baptism.

# BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx 1932-2004  
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TVHH K HVLZ ULKU VZ  
FAY CLUYEF, TAYZ AY  
AKFA ZL OUYX? TVHH K  
XLRZB HVLZ MUX LRF  
LC AVE QYZ, VC AY  
AKPY FKDYZ ZLFAVZB?

KGLE FAUYY: CLRU

Clue: C = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Matthew Twenty-Six: Fifty-two

## YOU WILL NEVER GET OUT OF DEBT

It is difficult to get through a single day, sometimes a single hour, without hearing someone commenting about the terrible condition of the economy. The conversation may be laced with comments about what the government is doing, should be doing, or should not be doing. It may include insights that reach far beyond the borders and shores of America, which recognizes that this is a worldwide problem. There are a lot of issues connected to the collapse of so many economic institutions and financial organizations, but one thing that certainly contributed to the economic peril is the problem of debt.

You can look at debt in any way that you want to, but it has long and multiple tentacles. There is the debt that people incurred as they bought a house they could not afford or bought one that was much larger than they needed. There is the debt that some have gone into to acquire an education or to buy things they felt that they could not live without. There is also the debt by which so many Americans have gradually been swamped, and that is credit card bills. Not only have they charged more and more on their credit cards, their credit card companies have charged more and more percentage-wise for the use of the card. Many financial advisors have in one way or another pointed Americans to a solution to keep from getting in a deeper hole debt-wise, and that is to stop digging.

However, there is a sense — a good sense — in which we will never get out of debt. Recently I was at the Pastors' Conference in Rankin County and ran into a dear friend, Reese Kyzar. Reese has been a friend for as long as I can remember and has served for decades as a pastor in our state. As we visited after the conference, Reese told me that due to some health issues, he had not been as active as he had been years ago. Recently, he had been asked to preach one Sunday and he was thrilled.

I asked him what he preached on and he said, "I preached on 'You Will Never Get Out of Debt.'" As soon as he said it, the thought from Scripture came to my mind along with a thought of appreciation for his insight and thoughtfulness to preach on the subject. Paul said in Romans 1:14, "I am debtor." Then he names basically everyone to whom he is indebted. For to them and others, he was saying that he would never get out of debt. I left the Pastors' Conference with that amazing and beautiful thought rambling around in my head and heart. We who know the Lord are forever debtors.

*First, we are indebted to Jesus who loved us so much and was willing to pay such an enormous price for us to be forgiven,*



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

receive a new life, and live for Him. We are debtors to Jesus and it is a debt we can never repay. If you worked every day, all day, all of your life, you could not earn enough to pay for what He did for you.

While you may be a nominal sinner, the reality is that you are not capable of paying for even one of your sins. In fact, if you were somehow able to never, ever sin again from this moment on — never have a wrong thought, commit a wrong act, speak a wrong word, or do anything that would be contrary to the will of God or out of line with the perfect law of God — you still would not be able to do anything about changing your past transgressions apart from trusting Jesus who paid the debt for you. It is a debt we will forever owe.

*Not only are we indebted to Jesus, we are indebted to others.* So many people have done so much to provide the Gospel of our Lord for us. So many have been involved in the discipleship that enables us to grow, know, and be used of the Lord. Sometimes we feel that we have done so much of it on our own. Our pride would cause us to be arrogant in thinking that through

our giftedness and our disciplined walk with the Lord, we are made into great saints. This is not so! As a person grows into adulthood and maturity and looks back, he or she begins to realize that there were people who were there on the scene who were feeding, loving, caring, and cleaning before we could ever even think or talk responsibly. We do not remember any of them, but they were there. They were there supporting, investing, loving, and stabilizing us until finally we were able to get food to our own mouths, stand up, take some steps by ourselves, and eventually put our own clothes on and go out into the world to school, to work, and be involved in life. If they had not been there, we could not be here.

Spiritually, that is the same kind of process in part that God uses to enable us to grow and to serve Him. I can promise you that without those caring people, loving families, teachers, churches, and institutions we would not be where we are today. You are indebted to others and it is a debt that you can never repay.

*Briefly, I would mention to you that we are also indebted to people ahead of us.* The pop-

ular thought that it is possible for us to pay it forward deals with the amazing concept that we can touch the future and make a difference in the lives of people beyond us who in turn will then make a difference in the lives of people beyond them who in turn will then make a difference in the world and in the people around them. We keep paying the debt forward.

The Kingdom of our Lord is not confined to any age or space. It reaches to us and far beyond us. We are the faithful stewards responsible for the now in our lives, but there are others who will come and they too will have a now. Some of those folks who will carry on Kingdom work we will be indebted to for their love, dedication, and faithfulness. Reese Kyzar was right on when he said, "You will never be able to get out of debt!" That kind of debt is not a bad thing for us to carry through life.

*The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.*

**HARMONY BAPTIST CHURCH**, Crystal Springs, MS is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume by June 1 to Harmony Baptist Church, 6057 Harmony Rd., Crystal Springs, MS 39059, Fax: 601-892-1124 or email: [hbcsgb@aol.com](mailto:hbcsgb@aol.com).

**ACCOMPANIST NEEDED:** FBC Greenville, Miss., is looking for a skilled accompanist to work part-time playing organ and digital keyboard. Accompanist must be dependable and willing to play traditional and contemporary music as well as choral anthems. Position is available now. Please email interest to [mddarby@fbc-greenville.net](mailto:mddarby@fbc-greenville.net) or call Matt Darby at 662-334-9452 or 662-822-1604.

**ENTERPRISE BAPTIST CHURCH IS** seeking a full-time Minister of Music, Youth and Children. Please send resumes to Ms. Betty Purvis, Chairperson, 370 County Road 3763, Enterprise, MS 39330, or email at [grammie\\_purvis@yahoo.com](mailto:grammie_purvis@yahoo.com).

**LAUDERDALE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**, Meridian, Miss., is seeking a full-time Associational Missions Director. Send resume to LBA, 5521 Clinton St., Marion, MS 39342, attention: AMD Search Committee. Must be postmarked no later than May 15.

**IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN** Vicksburg, Miss., is seeking individual for full-time Minister of Music. Please send resume to Immanuel Baptist Church, attn: personnel committee, 6949 Hwy 61 South, Vicksburg, MS 39180.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP** leader with some associate pastor duties; contemporary music style with live band and choir. Send resume to FBC Bude, 235 Bude Baptist Road, Bude, MS 39630, Phone 601-384-2326, FAX 601-384-8393. Resume deadline: May 1.

**SUMMER YOUTH WORKER:** EASTSIDE Baptist Church, Belzoni, Miss., Send resume to Eastside Baptist Church, 808 Virginia Street, Belzoni, MS 39036. Or email to [eastsidebaptist@bellsouth.net](mailto:eastsidebaptist@bellsouth.net). Call 662-247-3844 M-F 8-12 or leave a message.

**SEEKING PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER:** Gillsburg Baptist Church, Gillsburg, Miss., is searching for a Minister of Youth. Traveling expenses provided. Mail resumes to Chris Teasley at 6126 MS Hwy 568, Osyka, MS 39657 or call 601-542-1230.

# Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 4

## Crack Cocaine, Eminent Domain, and Legislation Gone Insane!

By Jimmy Porter  
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission



to sell alcoholic beverages or not. The bill originally made an area in Tishomingo County along with the Trustmark Park area (home of the Atlanta Braves Double A baseball team) and several areas of Picayune and Pearl River County a resort without

the right of the citizens to vote. Fortunately, the efforts of Reps. Ray Rogers, Mark Formby and Herb Frieson along with others forced the bill into conference where it was amended to permit all the areas a chance to vote on resort status except Tishomingo County. As the committee chairman in the House presented the bill he said, "The reason we are addressing this is because it is economic development." It did not seem to matter that the citizens of Rankin County and Pearl River County have recently voted to deny the sale of alcoholic beverages.

HB 1467 was a "Tourism" bill that passed the House and the Senate and was signed into law by our Governor. This bill enabled gambling interests to receive sizeable sales tax rebates for major investments in our state. In my opinion, the current tax structure for casinos is unfair to other businesses. The bill was touted as an economic development

bill. A representative from the coast commented shortly after the Governor's press conference of his signing the bill, "If we had gotten this two years ago, Margaritaville (a rather large gambling complex) would have already been built." The Christian Action Commission argued all along it was a gambling bill and not a "Tourism Bill." I still contend we were right. Economic development?

When I was a lad many years ago I enjoyed spending time on the farm at my grandfather's house. After all meals Ma Porter would take the scraps from the table and rake them in a five-gallon bucket that sat by the backdoor. It was called the "slop" bucket. Later Pa Porter would add water and head to the hog pen, pour the contents in the trough and the hogs would come running. The swine never cared what was in the slop just as long as it came out of that bucket. They would go insane pushing and shoving to see who could get there the fastest and eat the most.

Unfortunately in our state, our leaders have learned that if you will take a piece of legislation and label it economic development, some legislators will vote for it no matter the cost or the consequences. It is a tactic that gets some of the Republicans, some of the Democrats, some of the white legislators, and some of the black legisla-

tors to the same "trough." The ole "slop" bucket still works. It has just been renamed "Economic Development."

I am for economic development as much as the next citizen. Mississippi needs more economic development, but I do not believe in passing legislation that has the potential to destroy lives and families. Does it really matter if a drunk driver gets alcohol by the bottle from a liquor store or by the glass from a fine restaurant or country club with white linen tablecloths and then runs over and kills your family or friend with a car? If expanding alcoholic sales and availability is economic development, then I guess to some it doesn't matter the consequences and the tragedies.

Space prohibits the discussions of pro-life and pro-family issues that died in committees. That is another subject for another time. Usually this issue of Practical Principles is a wrap-up of the 2009 session, but as you know, they have not concluded their work just yet. Pray for your legislators, encourage them, and hold them accountable.

**Jimmy Porter** is director of the Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or email at [jporter@christianaction.com](mailto:jporter@christianaction.com).

### CLARIFICATIONS

To clarify the page one article from the issue of April 23, Baptist Student Union (BSU) Summer and Semester Missionaries are funded by money raised by Mississippi BSU programs. Each BSU in the state annually sets a goal, and students give to help reach that goal and send their peers as student missionaries.

Through the State Collegiate Missions Fund, Mississippi BSUs raise approximately \$150,000 annually to send student missionaries. Since 1947, BSU students in Mississippi have raised more than \$3.5 million to send student missionaries.

Students serving in North America are completely supported by these funds; they do not raise any of their own sup-

port. In an effort to allow more students to serve, students serving overseas raise a portion of their own support and receive financial assistance from the State Collegiate Missions Fund. "Students sending students" has been one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mississippi BSU missions program for more than 60 years. Mississippi Baptist gifts through the Cooperative Program provide BSU ministries on more than 30 college campuses across Mississippi.

The lead editorial on page two of the April 23 issue should have included the listing of Jim Futral as executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

### COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS

1. William Carey University proposes a plan to offer master of education courses at the Simpson County campus of Copiah Lincoln Community College in Magee beginning June 1. The program must enroll 15 students in order to be available. Registration for the new program will May 1 through May 30. For registration locations call (601) 318-6587. The cost of each course is \$840 and classes begin June 1. The GRE is not required for admission. For more information contact Barry Morris at (601) 318-6587 or [barry.morris@wmcarey.edu](mailto:barry.morris@wmcarey.edu).
2. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees activated the Robert L. Hamblin endowed faculty chair of New Testament exposition during their April 15 meeting. The chair honors long-time pastor, evangelist and professor Robert Hamblin. After 22 years as pastor at Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo, Miss., Hamblin joined the NOBTS faculty in 1980 to teach evangelism. In 1982, Hamblin was named vice president and director of evangelism at the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He returned to seminary in 1994 and served four years as professor of evangelism.
3. Mississippi College's Baptist Union will welcome Georgia native Ben Maddox as its new leader July 1. Maddox, 34, is completing his duties as campus minister for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, a post he's held since August 2005. At the same time, he's also worked as a campus minister at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia. He served as associate pastor to students at Lakeside Baptist Church in Milledgeville, Ga. for more than a year before taking his current assignment in Little Rock.
4. The William Carey University Piano Ensemble will perform in concert to benefit the Carey Institute of Fine Arts (CIFA) on Thursday, April 30, at 7:30 p.m. in Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Tickets are \$5 and may be purchased at the door or in advance. Donations are also appreciated. All proceeds from the concert will benefit the Carey Institute of Fine Arts Scholarship Fund. CIFA students, as well as WCU students, faculty, and staff are admitted free. For more information about the concert or the Carey Institute of Fine Arts, call the Winters School of Music at (601) 318-6175.
5. The Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) elected its 2009-2010 officers and new board members at the association's 2009 Convention held April 4, at the Jackson Hilton. Officers include President-elect Barry Morris, Chair of the Department of Education at William Carey University, and District 8 board member Nykela Jackson. Instructional Technologist for the Lamar County School District and Adjunct Instructor at William Carey University.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Friendship Church, McComb, deacon ordination



2. Concord Church baby dedication



3. New Bethel Church Easter egg hunt



4. First Church, Potts Camp, ladies conference



1. Friendship Church, McComb, held a deacon's ordination service Jan. 11. Six deacons were elected, and five were newly ordained. Shown, back row, are Tommy Myers, Tommy Caraway, and Kenneth Willingham; middle row, Michael Carter Brister and James H. Jackson, Jr.; front row, Tim Parker, Laverne Summerlin, David Blalock, James Earl White, and David Millican.
2. Concord Church, Booneville, had a baby dedication for Haillie Sonwineski, daughter of William and Stephanie Sonwineski. Shown are pastor Robert Walker and the Sonwineskis.
3. New Bethel Church, Carrollton, held an Easter egg hunt Apr. 5. Shown are some of the approximately 35 children who hunted eggs.
4. First Church, Potts Camp, held their 5th annual ladies conference Apr. 18. Shown are the participants.
5. The children's choir of Escatawpa Church, Moss Point, presented Down By the Creek Bank recently. Shown are the participants.
6. First Church, Bude, had a group who went on a 10-day mission trip to work with IMB missionaries who are serving in the West Africa Region. Shown, from left, are Elton Westbrook, Brad Moak, Libby Brown, Claris Westbrook, and Kelly Brown.
7. Plainway Church, Laurel, presented four plaques during homecoming Apr. 5. The recipients were recognized for their service over the years. Shown, from left, are Odis Windham, Barbara Balliet, G.B. Reeves, and Margaret Fredrick.
8. West End Church, West Point, is presenting the Precept Ministries International Training Workshop May 15 - 16, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. For information, call (662) 494-5960, 494-2137, or email mlouise299@bellsouth.net. Cost, \$95.



5. Escatawpa Church children's choir



6. First Church, Bude, missionaries



7. Plainway Church recognitions

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Madison, Mississippi

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



9. County Line Church Easter egg hunt



10. Union Church Moms on Mission

9. The children of County Line Church, Wayne County, enjoyed an Easter egg hunt Apr. 11. The children also were involved in collecting change for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Shown are the participants.

10. The Moms on Mission of Union Church, Caesar community, recently hosted a hot dog lunch and egg hunt for the children of the area. Over 100 children attended. Shown are the moms.

11. The Women on Mission of Calvary Church, Pascagoula, exceeded their Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal. Shown are Min Miller, Rachel Turner, Gaye Dawn Boyd, and Doris Thomas.

12. Calvary Church, Pascagoula, ordained Ken Miller as deacon Nov. 30, 2008. Shown are pastor Chris Carter and Miller.

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11. Calvary Church WOM



12. Miller ordination

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



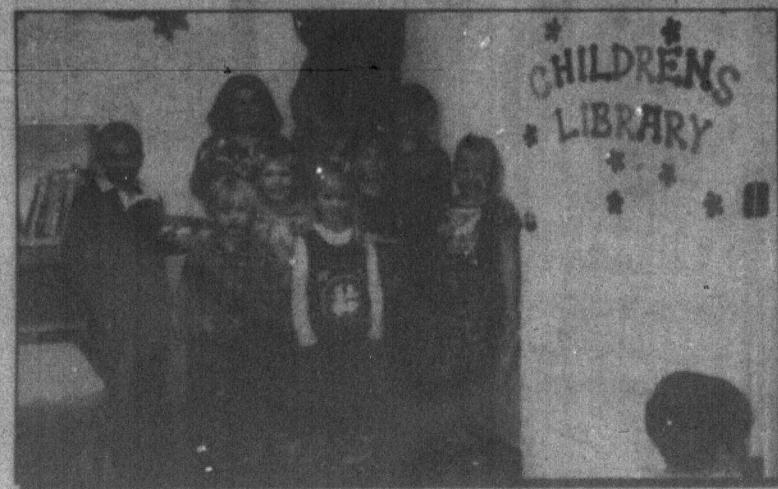
1. Fredonia Church mission team



2. Scotland Church Children in Action



3. County Line Church Easter Family Fun Day



4. Cedar Grove Church children's library

1. A group from Fredonia Church, New Albany, went to Costa Rica Mar. 15 - 21. Shown are the participants.

2. The children of Scotland Church, Montgomery County, participated in a children's ministry day Feb. 14 by hosting a Valentine's supper for the church and community. Shown are members of the Children in Action group.

3. Kids from County Line Church, Union, enjoyed Easter Family Fun Day at the home of Dot and Winfred Keen, spending time fishing and hunting for eggs. Shown are the participants.

4. Cedar Grove Church held an open house for their children's library Mar. 29, with all new books, CDs, puzzles, and toys. Shown are the children.

5. Oak Hill Church, Meridian, recently celebrated becoming debt free. Shown are Mike Russell, Jeffery Wilson, Douglas Davis, Frankie Richardson, Lynwood Clayton, Sonny Toms, Jim Downs, and Charlie Smith.

6. Center Hill Church, Hamilton, held a pancake breakfast Apr. 5 to raise money for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, raising \$462. Shown are the participants.

7. Calvary Church, Pricedale, held a baby dedication service Apr. 12. Shown are the participants.

8. Jimmy Dale Grantham, Sr., was named as standing deacon at Lakeside Church, Hattiesburg. He was ordained at Emmanuel Church, Gainesville, Ga., and served until moving to Lakeside Church.

9. Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg, will host the Southern Plainsmen May 3, 6 p.m., followed by a fellowship meal. For more information, call (601) 267-5717.

10. Faith Church, Ovett, is hosting a bluegrass gospel sing May 9, 6 p.m. For more information, call (601) 425-0452.

11. Ergun Caner, president of Liberty Theological Seminary, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., will be speaking at Country Woods Church, Byram, May 24, 10:30 a.m. Caner is the son of a Muslim leader in Turkey and is the author of 17 books.



5. Oak Hill Church



6. Center Hill Church pancake breakfast



7. Calvary Church baby dedication

*Princ Hamil*

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8

## STAFF CHANGES

1. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, held a reception for Jeff Freeman and his family April 19. Freeman is going to Philadelphia Church, Lincoln Association, as minister of youth and children. Shown are pastor Trent Bilbo, Freeman, and Danny Roberts.
2. Silver Creek Church, Pike Association, has called Lloyd Thompson as minister of youth. He is a student at William Carey University, and plans on attending New Orleans Seminary in the fall. He and his wife Sandy have four children: Jonathan, David, Katherine, and Benjamin.
3. Macedonia Church, Petal, has called Mark Farris as pastor. Farris comes from the First Church, Jackson, Madison campus. He and his wife Amy have three children: Cole, Molly, and Spencer.



1. Freeman reception



2. The Thompsons



3. The Farris

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## Be prepared for swine flu outbreak

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
*Editor*

It's too early in the swine flu outbreak for churches to be making plans to curtail activities or cancel services, according to the coordinator of Mississippi Baptist disaster relief operations.

"It is time, however, to encourage some common sense precautions that can stop or slow down the spread of the disease," said Jim Didlake, head of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force and Men's Ministry director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. "For example, covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing and frequent hand washing — whether or not an individual believes he/she is infected — are simple actions that can help contain the spread."

No cases of swine flu had been reported in Mississippi as of press deadline on April 28, but outbreaks in five states and New Zealand, as well as hundreds of deaths in Mexico where the flu strain is thought to have originated, have epidemiologists warning that the world may be on the verge of a pandemic.

A pandemic is generally defined as an epidemic occurring over a very wide area for an extended period of time, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting large numbers of people around the world. The last great pandemic was the Spanish flu of 1918, which killed 40 million people worldwide.

There have been a handful of smaller flu pandemics since then.

Didlake recommended frequent visits to the web site of the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) during the swine flu crisis.

"I always like to make the point that control of an outbreak of infectious disease is a shared responsibility and there are things that individuals need to do and there are things that communities need to do and there are things that the government needs to do," said Richard E. Besser, CDC acting director, in an April 27 press briefing.

"It's important that individuals realize they have a key role in reducing their own likelihood of getting infected. Those are the typical guidelines for respiratory infection (such as) frequent hand washing. If you don't have access to soap and water, (use) alcohol gel. (Cover) your cough or your sneeze. That's very important."

"If you're sick, and if you have a fever and you're sick or your children are sick, don't go to work and don't go to school. That can help reduce the likelihood that you will share that infection," Besser said.

Didlake said that's good advice for churchgoers, too. "If you're sick or think you're going to be sick, don't go to church. That goes for children, too. The whole family should stay home if one of the family members is sick," he said.

Didlake pointed out that the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force

IF A  
DISASTER  
STRIKES,  
WILL  
I BE  
PREPARED?

A Guide for Disaster Preparation  
*Includes Flu Pandemic Planning*



updated its pandemic planning during the bird flu scare several years ago. The result was "If a Disaster Strikes, Will I be Prepared?", a booklet that covers not only pandemics but earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

"A copy of the booklet was mailed to every Mississippi Baptist church in April 2008. Now would be a good time to get the booklet and read the preparedness information," he said.

The booklet is available online for individuals at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board web site, [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org).

A limited number of printed copies for churches are available through the MBCB Men's Ministry Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: [cwright@mbcb.org](mailto:cwright@mbcb.org).

## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. County Line Church, Crystal Springs: 181st anniversary, May 17; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Pat Bufkin, speaker.
2. Brush Creek Church, Walnut: Revival, May 3 - 6; Sun., regular schedule; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Ben Parman, speaker; special singing; Carroll K. Talley, pastor.
3. New Salem Church, McCall Creek: Homecoming, May 3, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Charles Case and The Messengers, worship; Howard Smith, pastor.
4. Center Grove Church, Meridian: Homecoming, May 3; services, 10:30 a.m.; Ervin Mooney, speaker; Jimmy Culpepper, pastor.
5. Union Hall Church, Brookhaven: Homecoming, May 3; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Daryl Oster, speaker; Billy Joe Deer, pastor.
6. Ethel Church, Ethel: Revival, May 3 - 6; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.: meals preceding Sunday and Wednesday services; Hugh Smith, Greg Belser, Barry Corbett, and Junior Davis, speakers; Greg Spencer, pastor.
7. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto: Homecoming, May 3; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; special offerings for cemetery fund and building fund; Trent Bilbo, pastor.
8. First Church, Blackhawk: Homecoming and revival, May 3 - 6; Sun., services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Promise leading in worship; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Rupert Ingram, David Rogers, and David Haggerty, speakers; Jerry Woods, music; Bryan Burson, pastor.
9. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia: Revival, May 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Taylor and Wesley Lee, leaders.

The Baptist Children's Village continues its efforts to meet needs for struggling families throughout the state. The addition of our eighth campus in Waynesboro will provide easier accessibility than ever before. In the current economy we recognize there are many families who need short term assistance to help them make changes that allow for long term success of their family.

We can care for children 2-20 years of age while parents complete career transition goals, which help them more effectively meet the needs of their families. Parents or grandparents can temporarily place children in the care of The Baptist Children's Village while they are recovering from an illness or injury that prevents them from providing for the daily, physical needs of their child or children.

The availability of campuses throughout the state make it easier for families to remain engaged with goal setting and decision making for their children, during their time at The Baptist Children's Village. The BCV is committed to positively impacting families all over Mississippi as it has done since 1897.

#### **The Baptist Children's Village Mission is . . .**

To help children and their families fully understand and experience the healing ministry of Christ by meeting their daily needs, and inspiring them to become Christian adults who are happy, healthy and mature.

#### **Message from Executive Director, Rory Lee—**

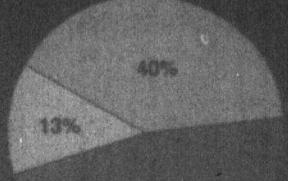
You may have seen a study released by the National Center for Homeless Families earlier this spring indicating that Mississippi had more than 11,000 homeless children. Astounding! While there is some discussion about the definition of "homeless", there can be no mistaking that there are indeed more than 11,000 children, within our state, living in environments that are heartbreaking, unhealthy, and perhaps even dangerous. There are countless families who are struggling with severe poverty and are unable to provide a home where their children can thrive and grow to be successful, independent adults.

Children living in shelters, or some other temporary housing arrangement, are forced to change schools repeatedly. They are exposed to sickness and disease that affects their health and hinders their school attendance. Parents who are overwhelmed with trying to provide the basics are unable to focus on education. Consequently, children and teenagers fall further and further behind and often drop out of school, giving up on any hope of a productive future for themselves and their family.

This same study ranked Mississippi 41 in 50 states for "homeless" children. This distressing reality is unacceptable in a state where so many resources are available through God's people. Through The Baptist Children's Village, churches just like yours, filled with people just like yours, have provided hope for families since 1897. Our S.A.F.E. Track ensures that every child who comes to our ministry has a plan focused on Spiritual Growth, Academic Achievement, Family Values, and Emotional Strength. Parents can focus on accomplishing necessary goals for themselves while we provide quality care and unconditional love for their children. Parents can retain legal custody and continue to be involved in their children's lives even though they are physically separated for a time, knowing that this temporary arrangement has a purpose and provides opportunity for long term success of their family.

Thank you for continuing to invest in this ministry that is making a difference for children and families in Mississippi. Please help us reach those families in your community who are struggling to be all that God desires them to be.

Evidence of God's provision through His people



## **The Baptist Children's Village Accessible to Mississippi Families**

Sincerely,  
  
**Rory Lee**  
 Executive Director



## **BCV 2009 Mother's Day Goal is \$390,000**

## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### Barzillai: The Man Who Grew Old Gracefully

2 Samuel 17:27-29; 19:31-39; I Kings 2:1, 7

by Arthur Story

Throughout Scripture we see people engaged in daily activities. Some of these people lived lives worthy of praise and admiration. Others lived lives that are deplorable and can only be condemned. In either case, their lives are worthy of our consideration because there is much we can learn from them. By examining the lives of people in scripture, we can see how we could live out our faith on a daily basis.

This week we begin a series of lessons focused on the lives of different individuals in scripture. As we examine each of these individuals, we will look at qualities from their lives that we should desire to live out in our own lives. This week's lesson focuses on character qualities from the life Barzillai and how we can grow old gracefully.



#### Supply the Needs of Others (2 Samuel 17:27)

The first character quality we see in Barzillai is his willingness to supply for the needs of others. David and those with him had been forced to take flight from Absalom after Absalom had swayed the hearts of the people away from David (2 Samuel 15:13-14). Because David no longer had access to his normal supply of resources, he and those with him were in need of assistance. When Barzillai and some of his peers learned of David's need, they took action to meet it. Barzillai didn't wait to be asked for assistance. He didn't become fearful about how Absalom might respond. He took action and provided for the needs of David and the people (verses

28-29). His decisive action was most likely the result of a lifelong habit of stepping up to meet the needs of others.

Most people's character remains constant as they age. People who are generous in their older years are usually people that were generous in their younger years. Those who are kind when they are older were also kind when they were younger. Growing old gracefully begins by growing spiritually now. Like Barzillai, we should willingly step forward to meet the needs of others without being asked and without being fearful about how some might respond to our actions. The key for each of us is to develop this character quality sooner rather than later. Old or young, the time to take this action is now.

#### Sacrifice for What is Best (2 Samuel 19:31-37a)

The second character quality we see in Barzillai is his willingness to sacrifice to ensure that what is best occurs. After Absalom had been defeated, David moved to return to

Jerusalem. In the process, Barzillai accompanied him to the Jordan River to see him off. At the Jordan, David invited Barzillai to return to Jerusalem with him so that he could provide for Barzillai.

Most people would have jumped at David's offer, but not Barzillai. While it was a gracious offer, Barzillai realized it wasn't for the best. Barzillai was obviously an intelligent man; a man of wealth and discernment (Verse 32; 2 Samuel 17:29). He would have recognized that as he aged and approached death, his presence in Jerusalem would have distracted David from his responsibilities as king and thus hurt the nation. In addition, Barzillai would have realized that he still had the opportunity to influence those in his home and community.

Like Barzillai, each of us should develop the quality of sacrificing for others. Then as we age, we will grow old gracefully by willingly choosing sacrifice for the benefit of others.

#### Serve Others (2 Samuel 19:37b-39)

The third character quality we see in Barzillai is his willingness to serve others. When Barzillai

told David he couldn't return to Jerusalem with him, he immediately provided a suggestion to the king. He asked David to take Chimham, his son, instead.

In contrast to Barzillai, Chimham would have been an asset to David rather than a distraction. David, Chimham, and the people of Israel would've all benefitted by this arrangement. David would have received a competent leader. Chimham would have received an incredible opportunity to serve the nation. And, Israel would have benefitted as David remained focused on his leadership responsibilities. Like Barzillai, each of us should serve others by working for their benefit over our own.

#### Set a Standard that Outlives You (1 Kings 2:1, 7)

In the end, Barzillai's selflessness had an impact beyond the lives of his family, his community, and David. He set a standard of character that outlived him and carried over into Solomon's reign. To grow old gracefully, start following Barzillai's example now!

*Story is Minister of Education, First Church, Louisville.*

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### The Invitation is Inclusive

Isaiah 55:1-13



by Beth S. Bowman

#### It's on the House! (Isaiah 55:1-3)

In these five verses, the prophet Isaiah is compelling the people of Israel to "Come, buy and eat!" Later he urges them, "Without money and without cost!" God has what the desperate people need. It is spiritual food for which they are hungry. People who are spiritually hungry will frequently spend money, time, and energy searching for answers that do not satisfy. They are often burned out, angry, restless, and without hope. The prophet is urging the people to make right choices for their spiritual life.

It's on the House! (Isaiah 55:1-3) God desires that Israel's witness among the other nations would compel them to the Lord God. God wanted to elevate Israel to a position of influence and an example of right living. The idea is presented that other nations would look to them for leadership and advice. Because of Israel's repentance, people would run to them as they became strong in the Lord.

#### It wasn't me! (Isaiah 55:6-7)

The pattern in verses six and seven are a mirror of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Isaiah calls for the people of God to recognize God's proactive call to repentance. God always wants to reward repentance with grace and mercy. This was the same for the people of Israel. Isaiah urges abandoning of their old ways and thoughts. We are

called to leave behind, to reject, neglect and be no suspect for sin. (Ok, that was cheesy). The Israelites were not to let anything get in the way of their following the Most Holy God. His forgiveness is available, abundant, and free for repentant people.

#### It's Over My Head! (Isaiah 55:8-11)

God's ways are not the ways of man. God's ways are infinite. It is interesting to see in the Encarta Dictionary the definition of the word infinite is "same as God." His ways are not measurable, not definable, and not limited. They are intentional and achieve His purpose even though we may not understand. Our responsibility is to trust in His ways and principles. In verse ten we see nothing that God does is wasted. The analogy here is about rain. Just as it has a purpose in saturating the ground for vegetation to grow, the bigger picture is His words. Verse eleven is a favorite of

mine. God's word will not return to Him empty but will accomplish that which God has sent it to do. We can be confident in proclaiming, teaching, and believing in God's word. It has the power to transform our lives and those we share it with. This is an encouragement for every faithful Sunday School teacher, VBS worker, and all those who teach the life-changing power of the Word each week to children, youth, and adults.

#### It's Forever and Ever (Isaiah 55:12-13)

God's plans were to reestablish the exiled people back into the Promised Land. These prophecies were written to the remnant of the nation of Israel. They would be reestablished in the Promised Land, and the land and the inhabitants would be blessed by their presence. Can you imagine mountains and hills breaking into singing? What about trees clapping their hands? Seems unimaginable, but God was teaching the people that their Godly lives would result in the overflow of blessings. His plans were to make a

name for Himself among nations through the repentance, righteousness, and the restoration of His people. God's plans were for the eternal placement of this sign.

The well-known expressions, "on the house" or "Get what you want, I am treating you," are always good to hear while in a restaurant. It is great to know that someone else is providing the payment. We were at a restaurant recently when my Dad asked Carson, our 12-year-old, what he wanted to drink with his supper. He quickly replied, "I would love a Coke. I have to order water when Mom is paying." What Carson said was true, and a little embarrassing, but I am so thankful God's plan for our restoration and spiritual satisfaction isn't on a budget! Isn't it great to know that the spiritual food and drink that will satisfy our deepest desires is always free to repentant people? There's always a Coke for believers in God's economy!

*Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon.*

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

# THE BAPTIST RECORD

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

# Northeast BSUers go north, south for spring break

By Wayne Vandiver, director  
Northeast Miss. Comm. College BSU

Spring break for the typical college student means a week of sleeping late, going on vacation, and kicking back and taking it easy. However, spring break has an entirely different meaning for a student involved in Baptist Student Union (BSU).

For BSU students, spring break means "spring break mission trip!" It is an opportunity to go somewhere and have the time to do nothing but let God use them to share the Gospel and be a servant.

The BSU at Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville used Spring Break '09 to go on two mission trips. One group went north to Cedar Rapids, Ia. The other group went south to BeachReach at Panama City Beach, Fla. Both groups had the opportunity to focus on sharing the Gospel with lost people.

The Northeast BSU has a witness training seminar each February to train students how to share the Gospel during these mission trips. Students learn how to use a survey or a tract as a means of starting conversations with people they will meet.

The Cedar Rapids mission team went to minister to people who had their homes flooded by the Cedar River in June 2008. They worked with a government entity called Americorps, which coordinated the work of volunteers in repairing the thousands of homes that were flooded.

Some volunteers were there to tear out the materials that

were ruined by the flood waters. Others were there to build new walls, hang sheet rock, and/or paint. The Northeast team was there to paint and share the Gospel with anyone they met. The Northeast team was able to get two houses painted on the inside and share the Gospel with fellow workers and Cedar Rapids residents. Students who had never shared the Gospel before were able to talk to people about what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Northeast team was able to stay at Northbrook Church, one of only two Southern Baptist churches in Cedar Rapids. This church family showed this team that hospitality was not confined to just the southern U.S. After the Sunday morning service, the group was surrounded by families wanting to invite them over for a meal. The team was able to spend time with four of the families as they shared meals together throughout the week. Team members were asked to share their personal testimonies by almost every family.

All these Iowa families were wonderful examples of what it means for Christ to be Lord of a home. One family even invited the Northeast team to come to their FEMA trailer to eat supper with them. They were so willing to give of what they had even though they had been displaced from their home.

The group that participated in BeachReach worked with approximately 440 other BSU students from approximately twenty-five other colleges. Their

ministry had a lot of variety. By the end of the week, each student had the opportunity to participate in street evangelism, "van evangelism," and witnessing to people as they ate free pancakes for breakfast. They also spent time in the prayer room praying for those that were out sharing the Gospel.

Van evangelism involved students working together to give free van rides to students that called in asking for a ride. Students who rode in the back of the van had the responsibility of sharing Christ with students getting the free ride.

Each day the BeachReach team worked together to cook a free pancake breakfast for approximately 1000 students. Some cooked, some cleaned up, and some talked to people about Christ as they ate breakfast.

"BeachReach '09 was so awesome! This trip might even be the best mission trip in which I have ever been able to be a part. God worked in many ways that I didn't even expect and used us to glorify Himself



REACHING STUDENTS — BeachReach participants from Northeast Miss. Community College Baptist Student Union in Booneville included (from left) Logan Windham and Kalyn Hunkapiller, East Booneville Church, Booneville; April Hamell, Crossroads Church, Pelahatchie; Rebecca Peel, Miner Church, Sikeston, Mo.; and Destiny Lamb, Arkabutla Church, Arkabutla. (Special photo courtesy of Seymour Tedford)

and enlarge His kingdom.

"The most awesome blessing I received was just having people on the vans pour out their hearts to me and God allowing me to share His love with them. Twenty-three people were saved as a result of this week. God is so good," said Clay Taylor, a Northeast graduate from Corinth.

When both mission teams left Booneville, one group took Highway 45 North, and the other took Highway 45 South —

but both groups encountered people that needed to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. God used the Northeast BSU to provide students an opportunity to get out of their comfort zone and share God's love by sharing that Gospel in Florida and Iowa.

The Northeast BSU wishes to thank all the churches and associations that provide financial and prayer support. Through this continued support, students will be able to participate in missions opportunities such as these.

## THANK YOU

Editor:

On behalf of the Gomez family, we would like to extend our appreciation to you, Mississippi Baptists, for the Christian love so many of you have extended toward us since Gregory's heavenly homecoming on July 5, 2008. Your acceptance of our son as one of your very own has touched us in such a special way. Your thoughts and prayers through cards, telephone calls, e-mails, and Facebook comments continue to be of tremendous comfort and strength for us.

Even though we may not know many of you and we are citizens of two different states, we are assured of our common bond as citizens of God's heavenly kingdom and look forward to being reunited with our precious Gregory one day. Until then, let us continue proclaiming the Good News of Salvation until He comes for us again.

Greg and Elida Gomez III  
Glen Carbon, Ill.

*Editor's note: Gregory Gomez IV, a 22-year-old recent graduate of the University of Mississippi, died in a vehicle accident in Peru on July 5, 2008, while serving as a student summer missionary.*

## FAST, PRAY

Editor:

Abraham Lincoln wrote an address to the nation during the Civil war that was at least as important as the Gettysburg Address. It was his proclamation for a national fast-day, by which he did designate and set Thursday, April 30, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer.

How ironic is it that April 30, 2009, falls on a Thursday? Wouldn't it be an amazing thing for you and me as followers of Christ to set aside Thursday, April 30, 2009, as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer for our nation?

I am asking us as a body of believers to set aside Thursday, April 30, 2009, as a day to fast and pray for our country. We, the body of believers of Petal-Harvey Church, are declaring April 30 a day of fasting and prayer for our nation. We are in a desperate need of a move of God and an outpouring of His Holy Spirit on our churches and nation.

If it is going to start, it first must start with God's people — you and me. We would like to challenge our area of believers to join with us on

this special day of fasting and prayer for our nation. Please read 2 Chronicles 7:14 as we fast and pray on the 30th.

Tracey Hipps, pastor  
Petal-Harvey Church  
Petal

## PRAYER TIME

Editor:

I would like to ask why we as Mississippi Baptists and the entire Southern Baptist Convention have not set aside a week or day of prayer for our nation? This is such a critical time in our lives and everybody is hurting in many ways over the economic situation. I feel we should band together and seek God's help and not just hope that it will get better.

Sibyl Gordy  
Forest

## LOW PROFILE

Editor:

This is written in response to Pastor Joey Barnard's comment on some Southern Baptist Congressmen's silence on the abortion issue.

Pastor Barnard, please be aware that whenever a member of Congress takes a stand

and verbally condemns abortion or puts a statement in writing to that effect, they give the opposition talking points and earn them out of state contributions to run against them and put them out of office.

I ask you, would you rather have our fellow Southern Baptists legislators be vocal and be voted out of office, or be low profile and cast a very influential vote when it counts the most?

Personally I would rather praise any Southern Baptists that have the courage to put it all on the line to run for elective office. I believe that they will do the right thing when it counts the most!

Edward Williamson  
Chaplain Major US Army  
Fort Carson, Co.

## DEATH ON DEMAND

Editor:

We're seeing assisted suicide activism aimed at seniors, the message being that as our years increase, our dignity and value decrease. The ultimate goal is death-on-demand for anyone, for any reason.

Mrs. Juarez Johnson  
Jackson



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.*

*Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.*

*Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)*

*Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.*

*Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.*

*No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.*

*When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.*